

## Gaetano, Carolyn

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**From:** Tarbox, Paul  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2013 10:01 AM  
**To:** Gaetano, Carolyn  
**Subject:** FW: SB 647 Testimony

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*Currently the United States of America has 308 million citizens yet only 2.8 million Armed Forces members and reservists. That is less than 1 percent of this nation's citizens whose sole duty is to protect the rights and freedoms of the other 99 percent.*

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**From:** Wagner, Matthew [<mailto:MWAGGNER@town.fairfield.ct.us>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2013 1:12 PM  
**To:** Rep. Hennessy, Jack  
**Cc:** Sen. Leone, Carlo; Tarbox, Paul  
**Subject:** SB 647 Testimony

Dear Representative Hennessy and Senator Leone,

My name is Matthew Wagner, and I am one of two Registrars of Voters in the Town of Fairfield, CT. I am writing to you today in opposition to proposed S.B. 647, "AN ACT CONCERNING VOTING BY MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY SERVING OVERSEAS."

As you may be aware, military and other overseas voters have access to absentee ballots 15 days before the general public, and that such ballots may be delivered to them electronically, following passage of the Federal MOVE Act and enabling legislation in Connecticut. Military voters also have the ability to return ballots without prepayment of postage, per 39 USC 3406.

As interest in elections understandably grows to a peak in the days immediately before the election, it has been found that a large share of military and overseas voters request their ballots too late to be sent, completed, and returned prior to the election. In this sense, I understand the desire to enable a more rapid form of ballot return for these voters.

However, allowing emailed or faxed ballots is a solution with serious privacy and ballot security implications. My primary concerns are:

- **Voters returning ballots through electronic or fax means must surrender their right to a secret ballot.** Apart from military or consular monitoring of their own internal network traffic, the completed ballot materials will be exposed to the recipient, as well as being potentially subjected to FOI requests. Many municipal fax

machines are located in public areas or are otherwise not under the control of sworn officials, potentially exposing these votes to manipulation before being sealed and delivered for counting.

- **Electronic delivery exposes ballots to computer hacking efforts.** While the number of military and ballots is currently small, these systems have been compromised on a number of occasions already, and even a perfectly secure system would be vulnerable to being overwhelmed and brought down by malicious network traffic.
- **The proposed bill creates a new class of ballot eligibility.** Making this option available to military voters and their dependents but not to other expatriates, foreign service personnel, or those traveling abroad will create confusion and, inevitably, rejected ballots as these other classes of voters attempt to return their materials through means not available to them.

I believe there are better ways to serve these voters to address the concerns of late delivery without compromising the votes of our military and overseas constituents. Specifically, proposed HB 6111, "AN ACT CONCERNING THE UNIFORM MILITARY AND OVERSEAS VOTERS ACT," would require that ballots sent by military and overseas voters be counted so long as they are received by the final canvass of votes by the Secretary of the State, Treasurer, and Comptroller (within thirty days following the election), as well as providing military and overseas voters with tools to check the status of their ballot request and submission over the internet, and correcting a problem for the children of U.S. citizens born overseas without a domestic address.

This approach is being propagated by the National Conference of Commissioners of Uniform State Laws, has been introduced by Rep. Godfrey, and provides a solution to the problems SB 647 seeks to remedy without introducing unintended problems relating to the privacy and security of military voters.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely yours,

Matthew Waggoner  
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